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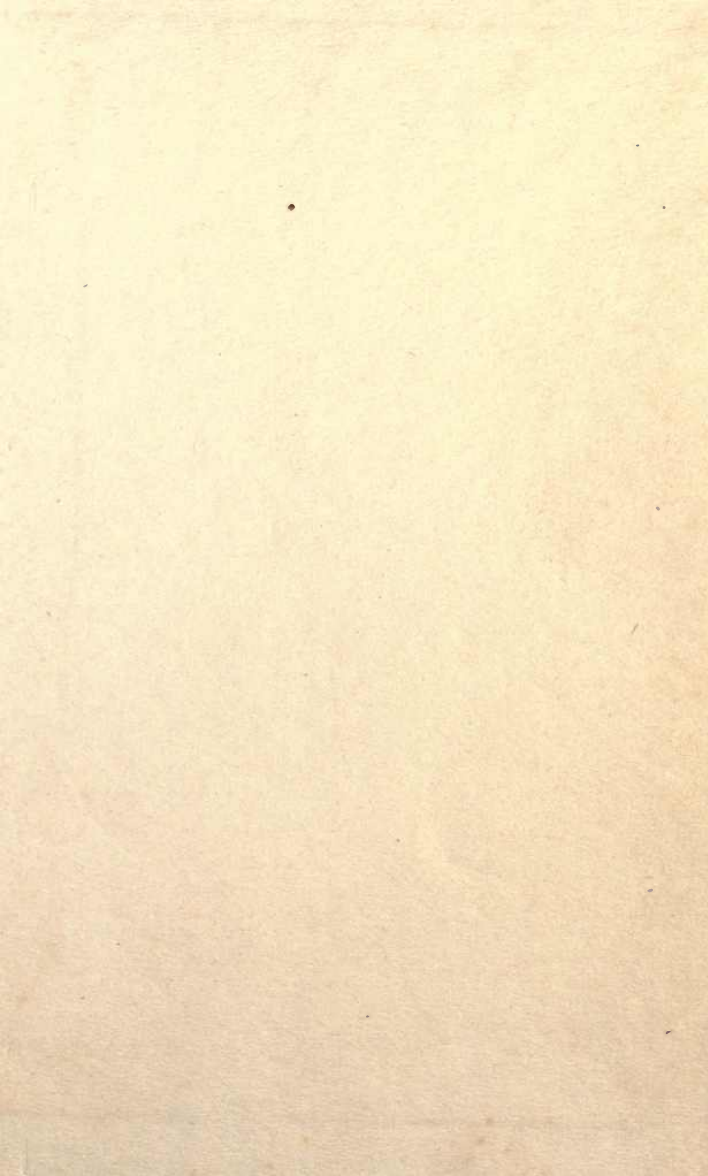


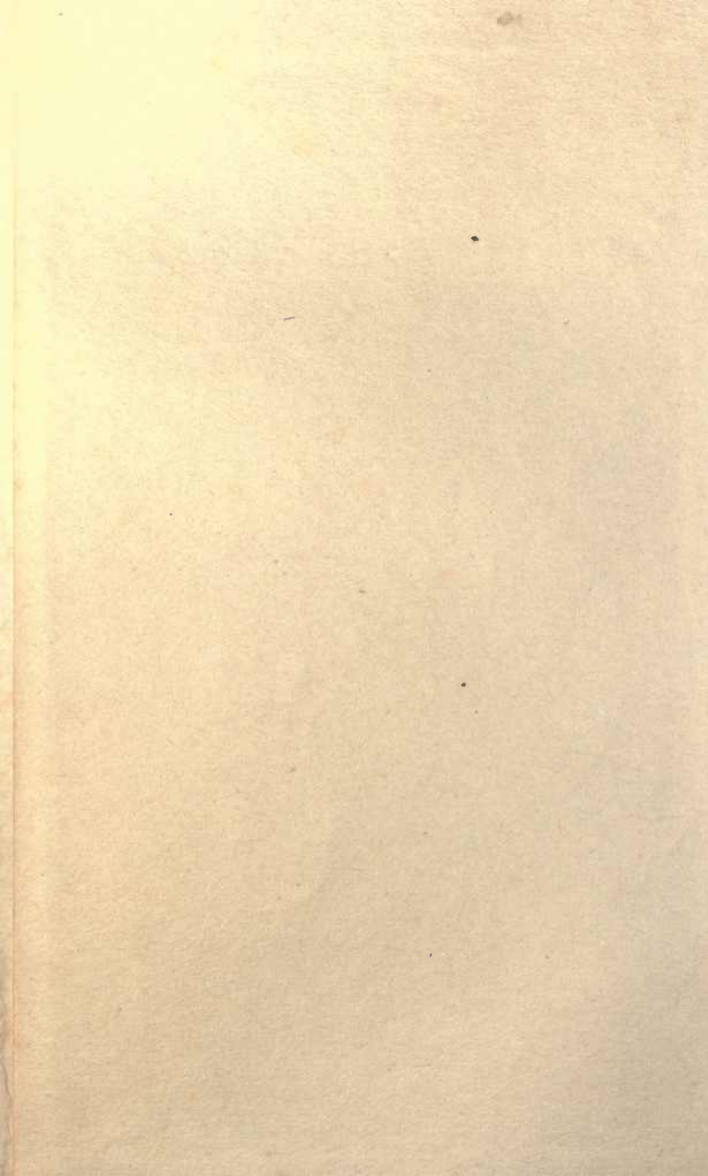
OLD SLOVENIAN

DEMOCRACY

VOŠNJAK.

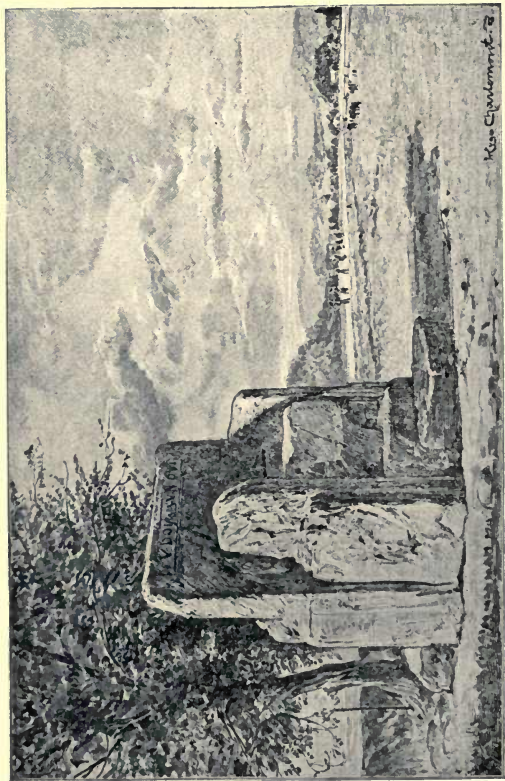












THE THRONE OF SLOVENIAN RULERS ON GOSPOSVETSKO POLJE, IN CARINTHIA.  
THE OLDEST PRESERVED THRONE IN EUROPE.

# A CHAPTER OF THE OLD SLOVENIAN DEMOCRACY

BY BOGUMIL VOŠNJAK

WITH AN EPILOGUE

BY NIKO ŽUPANIĆ, PH.D.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W

1917





## A CHAPTER OF THE OLD SLOVENIAN DEMOCRACY.

BY BOGUMIL VOŠNJAK.

THE Slovene Kopitar, one of the founders of Slavonic philology, says in one of his writings that the Germans of to-day ignore Slovene nationality, but that Einhardus, the biographer of Charlemagne, knew them very well. This is an amazing statement, but it only corresponds to the truth. The Slovenes were not always a wretched peasantry, as they appear during recent centuries. In the early Middle Ages they were stout fighters for political independence, the first State-builders among the Slavs, a stubborn and indomitable nation. Only a nation of this kind could have created and preserved in the days of its servitude such a marvel of political, historical, and democratic consciousness as was the installation and homage of the Slovene dukes on the Gosposvetsko Plain near Celovec (Klagenfurt) in Carinthia, on the extreme frontier of the national territory of modern Slovenia.

There was in old Carinthia the so-called Croatian shire, the *pagus Chrovati*, inhabited by a clan bearing the name of Croatians. Here, between the

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Drava and the Krka, was formed the centre of the first strong Slavonic commonwealth of a Western character. The sixth-century Slavonic settlement here on the marches of the Slavonic world was bound to have far-reaching results for Slavonic state civilisation and evolution. Through their contact with the Franks, Bavarians, and Longobards the Carinthians became the representatives of a high political type. Absolutely right is the assertion of a sociological writer, Peisker, who says: 'But they found a still harder task to build up their rude freedom into an orderly State. This the Carinthians brilliantly performed, remaining in true freedom without a nobility for a long time.' This plain beyond the Drava, called by the Slovenes of to-day the Gosposvetsko Plain, possesses the most ancient traditions of Slavonic freedom. Only in Russian republican Novgorod has Slovene Carinthia a more recent rival.

Krnski grad was the capital of free Slovene Carinthia in the early Middle Ages, the nucleus of a great Slavonic power in Central Europe, a state which would never have permitted the formation of the German nation as she appears to-day. But it was the misfortune of Carinthia that Christianity was the weapon of her foes, and that the Slovenes of Carinthia were Christianised by a foreign anti-national Church. Had the Carinthian national state had the support of a Christian Church of national origin the collapse of Slovene political independence would never have occurred.

Not far from Krnski grad in the Gosposvetsko Polje stands to-day a most ancient church—the Gospa Sveta, the Holy Lady. The visitor to this mediæval church will be struck by the antique aspect of this place of worship. Here, if we except the Dalmatian coastland, was founded the first bishopric in the Yugoslav lands. But the priests came from Salzburg; they were Germans and the strongest supporters of German statecraft. They were not in favour of Slovene freedom and the Slavonic ritual introduced in the Church by the two great Slav apostles, Cyril and Methodius.

The Slovene sense of political freedom was too strong to be suffocated at once. Old Slavonic state forms and customs survived the fall of Slovene true political independence. It was a struggle of centuries, fought with tenacity and the passive defence so characteristic of the Slavonic race. But the most important feature of a strong political symbolism was the installation and homage of the Carinthian dukes. It is a marvel of political symbolism, this ceremony, a true treasury of political and legal ideas.

There is a record every student of political theories ought to know. Bodin, the founder of the idea of modern state sovereignty, declares in the famous chapter 'Sovereignty' in his '*République*,' 'The Carinthian ducal ceremony has no rival in the world' ('*Six Livres de la République*,' Livre I, chap. viii.). It is unique as an assertion of the sovereignty of the people in a state ceremony.

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This same opinion is shared by Aeneas Silvius, Pope Pius II, who, in his '*Asiæ Europæ elegantissima descriptio*,' describes the installation and emphasises the fact that no other nation possesses a similar example of State symbolism.

The ceremony took place near Krnskigrad and on the Gosposvetsko Plain. It was divided into two parts, the installation upon the ducal stone near Krnskigrad and the homage before the ducal chair on the Gosposvetsko Plain.

Adjoining Krnskigrad there was a freehold owned by a peasant family whose chief had the right to introduce the Duke to his sovereign functions. He was the Ducal Peasant, an extraordinarily attractive figure in mediæval constitutional history. This ducal peasant was of old Slovene descent; he was the representative of the nation in this State ceremony.

On the day of the installation this free peasant lolled in a careless attitude upon the stone near the Krnskigrad, to await the Duke and his company. He wore a grey hat with a grey band, clumsy sandals, a grey shirt buckled with a belt of red, and a grey coat such as is worn by the Carinthian peasant. He was surrounded by a large crowd.

The procession arrives: the pages and cross-bearers, bishops and priests, men-at-arms and noblemen. In this splendid procession walks a man in the habit of a Slovene peasant. It is the Duke. He had to put off his ducal purple and ermine and to appear as a simple peasant before

the ducal throne, where the Slovene peasant is sitting cross-legged, proudly looking the prince in the face as he leads to the stone, where the peasant was seated, a dappled horse, lame and blind, and a lean black ox. The peasant asked the Duke, 'Who is it that draws near to me?' The Count of Gorica, as the Palatine of Carinthia, replied in old Slovene language: 'It is the lord of the land.' Again the peasant demanded: 'Is he a just judge—one who has the welfare of the people at heart? Is he a free man? Is he a protector of the faith?' After receiving an affirmative answer the peasant asked: 'For what consideration must I resign this seat?' The Count of Gorica replied: 'The place will be bought for sixty *penezi*. The beasts will be thine. Thou wilt receive the Prince's habit, and thy house will not be taxed.' The peasant then took charge of the ox and mare, and withdrew. Then only did the Prince ascend the ducal stone. Still wearing the garb of a peasant, he was hailed by the people. Men and women, as the 'Schwabenspiegel,' the German mediæval legal code, reports, sang old Slovene songs around him, giving thanks to God that He had sent them a lord to their wish and will. Then the Duke was conducted three times around the stone by the people. After this the Duke brandished his naked sword from the stone. Still garbed as a peasant, he had to drink a mouthful of fresh water from the Slovene peasant's hat.

During the installation some of the Gradiniki



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were mowing a meadow, others brandished a torch, yet others were saddling and bridling horses.

After the installation the Duke, in the midst of the procession, repaired to the old Church of Gospa Sveta. He was led by the Count of Gorica, who was in command of twelve standard-bearers, representing the twelve shires of the Slovene lands. The Duke, still attired as a Slovene peasant, was anointed in the church of Gospa Sveta by the Bishop of Krk. After leaving the church of the installation, the Duke finally put on his splendid ducal robes. In full ducal splendour he attended the coronation banquet.

The second part of the ceremony was the homage on the Gosposvetsko Plain before the ducal chair. In this the Duke, seated in the ducal chair, distributed fiefs, and the vassals did homage. The ducal chair has two seats. The eastern seat was occupied by the Duke, the western by the Count of Gorica, each distributing fiefs and receiving homage.

Amazingly astonishing is the wealth of symbolism in political ideas enshrined in this ceremony. The sovereignty of the people, distrust of the power of the Duke, guarantees against despotism, all are in a truly wonderful way embodied in this installation ritual. It is like embroidery interwoven with noble ornaments and symbols.

First of all the rôle of the ducal peasant must be considered. Who is he, and what is the meaning of his action? The ducal peasant is a freeholder whose family at the beginning of the Carinthian

State occupied a notable position of consequence among its kinsmen and deserved well for its share in the introduction of democratic rule. Until the Duke is installed, *he* is the holder of the State power, and it is from him that the Duke receives authority to rule the State. The nation desires a ruler, or a foreign ruler is imposed on it. Nevertheless it would fain remind the ruler that the people is the source of power. The people as a whole cannot be an actor in the ceremony ; it requires a protagonist, the ducal peasant, whose ancestors were fighters in the early struggle for national freedom. The nation is democratic, and its representative is a peasant, but a freeholder.

In his poem, 'Der Pfaff vom Kahlenberg,' the Austrian statesman and poet, Prince Auersperg (better known by his pen-name of Anastasius Grün), gave a vivid description of the historic function of the ducal peasant. The old goodman says to his nephew :

The warden of its right of old  
This land mine ancient race doth hold ;  
The plough hath writ on mead and lea  
Our patent of nobility.  
And by my mouth and by my hand  
Its lord acknowledgeth the land ;  
And would the Duke ascend his throne,  
Then to the rugged chair of stone  
One of our house his guide must be.<sup>1</sup>

The peasant is proud of the fact that his power is more ancient than the Duke's. He shows his rough tally to his nephew, saying :

<sup>1</sup> Translation by F. S. Copeland.

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This tally with its rude incisions  
Our princely chronicles of State,  
Where briefness doth with clearness vie,  
A dash a prince may signify.

As the personifier of the people, the peasant is the provisional occupant of the ducal stone. The stone is the kernel of the land, and whosoever possesses it is the rightful holder of the land.

The Duke must approach the stone in the guise of a peasant because he ought to be a democratic ruler. The ducal peasant transmits his authority only to a man who is his equal, not to his superior. The Duke is the ruler elected by the people, which prefers a peasant to a nobleman.

What is the meaning of the mare and the ox which the Duke leads up to the peasant? These two beasts are symbols of agriculture. By taking with him the mare and the ox, the Duke symbolically intimates that he will protect agriculture. It is a guarantee of material prosperity for the peasantry. The Slovene peasants do not trust the Duke. They demand guarantees that he will perform his duties of a just ruler. The peasant on the stone asks questions as to the methods of his government and how they will be carried out. The Duke may be installed only if the answers are satisfactory. A convention is concluded between the peasant and the Duke. For his vacation of the chair the peasant receives 60 *penezi*, he will be the owner of the mare and the ox, his freehold will be exempt from taxation. Finally, the peasant garb worn by the Duke will be given to the ducal

peasant as security that the Duke will keep his promises.

The people is the fountain of all State power. The people gives its consent to the installation. Rejoicing men and women praise the Duke in old Slovene songs. Slovene is the language of the Carantanian State; the questions of the peasant, the answers of the Count of Gorica, and the songs of the people are all in the ancient tongue of the Slovenes.

Before the peasant withdraws, he gives the Duke a blow upon the cheek. What means the blow given to the Duke in the presence of the people in so solemn a moment? There are two explanations. According to the Bohemian historian Peisker ('Aeltere Beziehungen') the blow means that the ducal peasant retains a certain power over the Duke even after the installation. The peasant has the right and the duty to proceed against the Duke if he fails to fulfil the obligations he has undertaken. As the representative of the people, the ducal peasant had the right to oppose every unlawful act of the ruler. The other explanation by Puntchart, who wrote a monograph entitled 'Herzogseinsetzung und Huldigung in Kärnten,' is not at all probable. According to him, it is a kind of accolade; but first of all, the peasant was not a noble, and as a peasant he could not bestow knighthood. The Duke, on the other hand, was a noble, and did not require the bestowal of knighthood.

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The true symbolism of the blow is rooted in the profoundly democratic sentiments of the nation. The blow signifies the right to rebel. If the ruler should violate his obligations, the nation is free from its allegiance—it no longer has the duty to obey. A revolutionary element is also enshrined in the following symbolistic acts.

During the installation, the Gradiniki mow another man's meadows near the ducal stone. A second freehold peasant brandishes the incendiary torch, and a third

Lays the saddle on the courser  
To leave no hostage for the raid.  
The law of lordless days departs  
O'ermastered by a stronger hand.

Such is the vision of the poet. In case the Duke refuses to give guarantees, the peace will be broken and civil wars destroy the land. But these three acts may also have another meaning. They may signify in a veiled form the right to rebel. If the Duke will not govern according to the law, then the nation has a right to dethrone the Duke who despises the law.

Before the Duke leaves the stone near the Krnskigrad he has to perform an important act, common to coronation ceremonies in general—e.g. to the Hungarian coronation. He has to brandish his naked sword towards North, South, East, and West, and thus symbolically to take possession of the land and promise to be a strong defender of the commonwealth. The Duke per-



forms this action in the garb of a peasant. The people is inexorable. The Duke must be humbled yet again. He must drink fresh water from the grey Slovene peasant hat as an admonition that his power is of peasant origin and that his life ought to be simple and modest like that of a Slovene peasant.

This unusual wealth of symbols ought to be classified. They are of an economic, democratic, and national character. The ceremony does not take place in a church or palace, but under the open sky. The plain is surrounded by high Alpine mountains, and upon everything there is a touch of Alpine and rural life. A comparison with the Swiss Landgemeinde—the meetings of the small Alpine democracies—were perhaps not inappropriate. The ceremony is essentially a rustic one. The peasant is the centre of the ceremony. He is the representative of the people, which is agricultural, not of the town. The Duke has to lead the two symbolical animals, the mare and the ox. The tradition of the two animals means a guarantee to the people that it will be able to pursue its agricultural labours in peace. The mare and the ox are not the best of their kind; they are emaciated by hard work in the fields, and represent the drudgery of agriculture.

The Slovene peasant of this ceremony is full of common sense and native shrewdness. He is suspicious, and jealously guards his constitutional guarantees. Indeed stronger guarantees could not

easily be invented. (Peisker.) These peasants were strong, proud men, loving liberty. The mediæval Germans in the 'Schwabenspiegel' characterised Slovene peasantry thus: 'They do not accept the rule of nobility or power, but only honesty and truth.' It was a very well-known fact in those days that there was no people more honest or more religious than the Carinthians. But they were also a proud stock of men. There was a saying, 'He does not take off his hat to the German Emperor: he is a Slovene peasant.' This saying is the embodiment of a legal custom. The Ducal Peasant had the right to wear his hat at the Emperor's Court.

This ceremony is a true quintessence of democratic ideas. The sovereignty of the nation is expressed so strongly, so emphatically, and by such admirable symbols, that we can hardly find the democratic idea more clearly expressed in any other constitutional ceremony. The Duke receives the power from the people, who are full of true democratic distrust, demand strong guarantees, and to whom is given the supreme appeal to the right of revolution. The Duke is dependent upon the goodwill of the peasantry.

This old Slovene peasant commonwealth was not cemented by force. It was founded upon justice and law. The first question of the peasant Duke is: 'Is he a just judge?' The Duke is the first judge in the land. Justice is the aim of the old Slovene peasant. Without justice there can

be no political order, no social harmony. The Duke must have the welfare of the people at heart. He should not privilege any class, any estate. Before him all citizens are equal in right and duty. Modern democratic ideas were realised in the old Slovene State of the seventh century. The peasant will only install a ruler who will promise social solidarity, relations more generous and more noble between man and man. Not subordination by conquest, not slavery, are the foundations of this State, but the highest moral teaching of true and free citizenship.

Another element embodied in the ceremony is the old Slovene national element. The ceremony was doubtless created in the early days of Slovene national State life. Would any German ruler have been so foolish as to create a ceremony which was so thoroughly humiliating to him? The ducal stone and chair stand in the very heart of Carantania in the Croatian shire. It is extremely interesting from our Yugoslav point of view of to-day that the Croatian name survived just on the spot where exist the most venerable Slovene political traditions. The questions and answers are put and given in old Slovene. The peasant Duke is of Slovene extraction. The Duke wears the Slovene peasant garb.

Another argument for the absolutely Slovene origin of the ceremony is that only the installation, and not the homage, bears a truly national symbolical meaning. Fine legal and political ideas are

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embodied only in the installation, which is of purely national Slovene origin. On the other hand, the homage is of a purely feudal character; it is a function, introduced after the conquest. In this the people have no further part to play, only the Germanised nobility.

The Count of Gorica is the personality common to both installation and homage. He escorts the Duke to the stone, bearing the ducal standard and commanding the standard-bearers of the twelve Carantanian shires. He is a representative of the national unity of Carantania, though Carantania is divided into twelve shires, in token of the large territory of the Slovenes. The highly gifted historian Levec asserted that early Carantania was absolutely an ethnic conception. But undoubtedly the subsequent twelve shires of Carantania represented a political Slovene unit.

As the representative of Carantanian unity, the Count of Gorica takes his place on the other side of the ducal chair. He is the counterpart of the Duke; he looks to the West, as the Duke looks to the East. Carantania is a Western and Eastern State. Two worlds are united here. The Count of Gorica, as the Duke's highest official, has to watch over the expansion of the State in the direction of the West, the Duke has to look to the Eastern side.

A custom not deeply rooted in the soul of man, one which was not the expression of a political individuality strong as iron would not have sur-

vived the conquest. The miracle is that this ceremony not only survived the conquest, but survived it for full eight centuries.

The Bohemian historian Palacky mentions that King Ottokar II of Bohemia was installed as Duke of Carinthia in 1270, only a few years before his defeat by the Habsburgs. During the centuries that followed, the Habsburgs were several times persuaded to submit to be humbled by the Slovene peasant. The poet was right when he said 'Ein harter Sitz' (a hard seat). Duke Ernest of Austria was the last to go through the ceremony in its ancient form in 1424. Anastasius Grün gives a masterly picture of the historic scene :

Solemn grandeur, reverent silence,—  
The leafy crowns are still as death,  
And rigid gold the standing crops ;  
Scarce breathes the waiting multitude.  
So that unhindered may arise  
The prince's voice unto the skies  
There blending with God's Holy Breath.  
For doubly sacred such an oath  
'Fore Nature and the nation both.  
Let perjury not fear alone  
An outraged people's anger stirr'd ;  
But it must blush before the stone,  
The blade of grass, the nesting bird.

And the Habsburgs perjured themselves for centuries when they destroyed the Slovenes' independence, undermined their national existence, and destroyed their historic rights.

The rulers of Austria as German Emperors, likewise, often endeavoured to escape the demo-



cratic humiliation as Dukes of Carinthia beside the ducal stone. Thus in 1403, Frederick III was excused from the ceremony by the States of Carinthia, but he was obliged to guarantee that his exemption should not mean abrogation. The Emperor Maximilian begged the Estates of Carinthia that he might go through the ceremony of the Gosposvetsko Plain by proxy. The Archduke Charles of Austria received the feudal oaths of allegiance on the Duke's chair in 1564. His father, Ferdinand, requested the Estates of Carinthia that his son should not be obliged to go through the rest of the ceremony. A committee of the Estates met to discuss the constitutional side of the question. The reply of the envoys of the Emperor to the Estates in the Castle of Celovec was, that the omission of the ceremony would in no wise prejudice their constitutional rights.

Ferdinand II, in 1597, was the last Carinthian Duke who occupied the ducal stone. He was the last Duke who humbled himself before the Slovene peasant and gave the ritual answers in old Slovene.

Later on, under the Habsburgs, the ceremony degenerated into a pitiful farce. The Emperor Ferdinand was in 1651 represented by Count Sigismund of Dietrichstein. This was the last occasion upon which the ducal chair was used. It was the last homage—the last appearance of the ducal peasant. The ancient custom fell into desuetude. Slovene independence perished, but

the old Slovene traditions continued to struggle irresistibly through centuries against abolition.

The most tragic figure in this drama is the Carinthian 'dukemaker,' the ducal peasant. His freehold still enjoyed privileges, but he was shorn of this splendour. He did not flinch under the bad fortune of the times. He was of old Slovene stock, steadfast also in adversity. He struggled courageously with the Imperial bureaucracy for his rights. The courtiers made a jest of him. One of the last of the ducal peasants was blind and poor. In 1801 the freehold of the duke-maker was sold, and the peasant moved to Celovec, where he became an innkeeper, having received the privilege from the Emperor of Austria to import two barrels of Italian wine annually free of tax or duty. Truly an Imperial gift! The last of the family died in 1823. Yet so strong was the memory of the constitutional rôle of the ducal peasants in the heart of the Carinthian peasantry that crowds of peasants attended the funeral of the last representative of old Slovene democracy. The funeral was a great triumph for aristocratic Germanism.

Old chronicles tell us that to the Viennese about the Emperor the ceremony on the Gosposvetsko Plain was often a subject of scornful laughter. The men of the court did not understand the act of the peasants. They had no feeling for the deep meaning it embodied. The last remnants of a free democracy were contemptible in their eyes. The Viennese was in the past no less than to-day

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the very antithesis of a man born in freedom and fighting for free citizenship. The free Carinthian Slovene of the old stock, strong and invigorated by the pure Alpine air was to the obsequious, intriguing courtiers of Vienna the representative of another, greater, larger, freer world which they did not comprehend. Generally the ducal peasant, the type of the free-born people, was invited to the coronation banquet. And there—so we read in old chronicles—the courtiers were amazed at the Slavonic intelligence, wit, and good humour of the simple rustic.

The tragedy of the ducal peasant is the tragedy of the Slovene people. A sad fate befell this people; it missed a great historic opportunity of gathering around the ducal stone a Western Slavonic Empire. It became a people sunk in oblivion, in misery, and calamity. The well-spring of freedom ran dry. The German poet spoke truth when he said :

So long as flows this well-spring clear,  
So long as men this oath revere,  
The Prince's Stone is held in honour,  
So long shall live in pristine might  
Our proud and trusty ancient right.

But the ruler disregarded his oath; the old law departed, and as for the mountains, they stand about

The catafalque of Freedom's corse  
In weeds of woe, with hands a-wringing  
Like mourners at a funeral.

The ducal stone is the 'catafalque of Freedom's corse'; but this catafalque of Freedom never

ceased to inspire Slovene popular imagination. A few years before the Great War a young Slovene author took the installation as theme of a novel. He was accused of high treason, and his work was taxed with being a Serbian propaganda; he was finally sentenced to a severe term of imprisonment with hard labour. Thus the Duke's chair became through an Austrian Court the symbol of Yugoslav unity and freedom. The ducal peasant will not lack successors, and perhaps one day we shall witness the installation of another dynasty of Yugoslav blood and sentiment. Not with distrust, but with love and enthusiasm, will the new ruler be hailed. Cancelled will be the memory of so many centuries of calamity, reverse, and humiliation.

Apart from all patriotic enthusiasm, we must define the true value of this old Slovene constitutional ceremony. It possesses not a local, but a universal intrinsic value. The most serious German and Slavonic scholars are agreed upon that. Krek, one of the ablest Slavonic philologists, thinks it is one of the oldest monuments of constitutional rights of the people. Even such a professor of the Pan-German pattern as Puntschart frankly declares that the installation is one of the most interesting judicial antiquities of Europe, that ducal stone and chair occupy a prominent place among the historical monuments of constitution and civilisation. ('Herzogseinsetzung und Huldigung in Kärnten,' p. 301.)

And what of the Slovene people who created

this law and usage? The installation was a real old Slovene constitutional law existing until modern ages. Can it be supposed that the race, which saved this law in the centuries of subjection and humiliation, was weak and despondent? The political spirit, which created and preserved this marvel of civic freedom, was always strong and fearless. The history of the Slovene installation shows what political resource was hidden in the soul of these poor peasants. Their connection with the struggle of to-day is only natural. Carinthia is the march of the Yugoslav lands. Here Prussian Pan-Germanism has challenged Slavdom. The Ducal Peasant is dead, but his nation has remained faithful to its great historical mission to defend this ground with tenacity—not to yield, but rather to die.



## EPILOGUE

FROM the above article of my friend and compatriot, Prof. B. Vošnjak, the reader will have a true picture of the old Slovenian democracy. In those dark ages when feudalism was omnipotent, when the working classes elsewhere were subject to servitude, the Slovenian peasants possessed the right to nominate their ruler and, should he not keep his promise to rule justly, to rebel against him. The ideal, for which we are now fighting, that the source of authority and power is the people, and for which rivers of blood have been and are being shed, was already a thousand years ago practised by the simple peasants of Slovenia (Caranthania) in the Eastern Alps.

The Slovenian people watched jealously over their rights, although they fell under the German yoke. They lost their independence in the eighth century as a result of a civil war among the partisans of the Christian religion and the old Slavonic creed. The Christian religion, although not foreign to their freedom-loving and democratic character, nevertheless brought with it bondage and slavery for them. For the most fervent preachers among them were German missionaries, and at that

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time, as to-day, the Germans used religion as a weapon of conquest for the subjugation of other races. Then, as to-day, their desire was to model the world according to their own ideas, and this was the cause of the civil war among the Slovenes and the loss of their independence.

But, although subject to the Germans, first to the Bavarians and then to the Franks, they struggled hard to keep their democratic institutions. They remained united, and, if their geographical position had not been unfavourable to them, they would probably have regained their liberty and have brought thus the torch of democracy into the world. Sanguinary struggles against the Turks, Magyars, and Germans were their lot. The struggle against the Germans was especially costly in sacrifices. While they were fighting against the Turks in the name of Christianity, defending European civilisation against the barbaric hordes, the Germans were taking advantage of their inability to fight against two enemies at the same time, and the Slovene lands were changing hands, so that during the course of a millenium they have lost two-thirds of their national territory, and the famous Gosposvestko Polje, not far from Celovec (Klagenfurt), once the heart of Slovenia, is to-day an hour's journey beyond the Slovenian national boundary.

But during all these bitter struggles the Slovenians never lost heart. They believed in the righteousness of their cause; they believed

that the day was coming when justice, on which their national state was founded, would again prevail in the world ; they believed that democracy would be victorious in the struggle with despotism ; they believed that the day would come when all men would be brothers and free. This is why they have not lost heart, why they tenaciously resisted and hoped. . . .

They firmly believe that their hopes will be fulfilled in this war, which can never end with the victory of the dark forces against civilisation. They do not believe that after being liberated from the German yoke they may be assigned like a dead thing to a foreign master, for they know that such a thing would be a crime against civilisation and humanity and would consequently be excluded from the aims of the Allied Powers fighting for those very ideals which in reality they have possessed and defended in servitude throughout their history. That is why they believe that their cherished desire of forming a free and independent community with their brothers in blood and language, the Croats and Serbs, will be realised, and that their national territory, for which they have fought and died, shall not be cut into slices to satisfy the ambitions of any other nation, and especially that their vital nerve, their coast-provinces, shall not pass into the possession of a foreign power under any pretext whatever.

They believe in the victory of good over evil, in the victory of democracy over autocracy, and

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with this faith in their hearts they are joyously awaiting the approaching day when the sun of liberty will shine over their cultural and geographical centre, 'the white Ljubljana' (Laibach), blessing their happy union with their brothers, the Serbs and Croats, and encouraging them to renew their old democracy and to bring into practice their old principle that the source of authority and power is the people and that the foundations of society must be based on justice.

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